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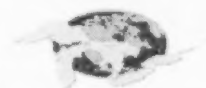
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... a monthly bulletin
from Canadian
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 About the monthly
Water Level bulletin

 June Precipitation
Over the Great
Lakes

 As a percentage of
the long-term June
average:

 Great Lakes 129%
Basin

 Lake Erie 133%
(including
Lake St.
Clair)

 Lake 119%
Superior

 Lakes 128%
Michigan-
Huron

Lake Ontario 144%

 Note: These figures
are preliminary.

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Volume 4, Number 7

July 5, 1996

Lakes Superior and Ontario Remained Steady In June

Heavy Rainfall Over Lower Basin for Third Month

A combination of heavy rainfall and below normal temperatures, which limited evaporation, led to a rapid rise in levels of the middle Great Lakes for the second month in a row.

Although Lake Huron and Lake Erie levels are currently about 20 cm and 30 cm respectively above their seasonal averages, they are still well below the record highs that occurred in 1986. Nonetheless, current conditions indicate somewhat above average levels for the coming fall, which is typically considered a stormy season. If this wet trend should continue, there could be some localized flooding and increased erosion during fall storms.

After undergoing a rapid rise in water level in May, the levels of Lakes Superior and Ontario remained virtually unchanged during June.

Lake Ontario's level last month was probably this year's peak. The heavy June rainfall prevented any decline in the lake's level, and a wet summer could raise its level slightly. Further increases in the level of Lake Superior are expected this summer.

The outflow of Lake Ontario in June averaged 8330 m³/s. This was slightly more than the amount specified by the regulation plan and above June's long-term average of 7840 m³/s. Lake Superior, the other lake that is also regulated, had an outflow of slightly less than the amount specified by the regulation plan, due to ongoing repairs at the St. Marys River's compensating works.

Water levels at the Port of Montreal declined rapidly from their peak values in May to near seasonal average conditions by early June. While levels are expected to decline further in July, they should remain well above chart datum.

Gate Opened At Compensating Works

On June 24, Lake Superior's outflow was increased by opening an additional gate at the Compensating Works in the St. Marys River. This makes it three gates fully opened and has increased the flow in the St. Marys Rapids.

Issue Index

The decision to increase outflow by opening an additional gate was prompted by above average levels on Lake Superior over the past two months.

Summary information for
"LEVELnews"

Our May issue of Level News explained that on-going repairs at the 16-gated Compensating Works has limited the number of gates that can be used to discharge flow. Changes in repair techniques made it possible to open one additional gate without hampering the repair effort.

Despite the flow increase, Lake Superior's outflow remains less than the amount specified by the regulation plan.

Heavy Turnout at Public Meetings

Heavy turnout at two recent meetings showed that Great Lakes water levels remain a key and even contentious issue.

At the June 3 public meeting in Watertown, New York, hosted by the IJC's International St. Lawrence River Board of Control, 45 people attended and more than 20 of them made presentations. The Lake Ontario shore property owners and area elected officials expressed concern with high water levels and ongoing erosion problems. On the other hand, recreational boaters and marina operators in eastern Lake Ontario and the Thousand Islands area of the St. Lawrence River expressed a preference for higher levels. Representatives of environmental interests indicated a desire for somewhat more natural level and flow fluctuations.

The June 18 public meeting in Paradise, Michigan drew 35 people. Area residents told the International Lake Superior Board of Control of on-going erosion in the Whitefish Bay area, and expressed concern that a high Lake Superior level is accelerating the process. During June, Lake Superior was 12 centimetres above average.

The heavy turnouts at both meetings may be partially attributed to the recent rapid rise of levels on the Great Lakes, brought about by higher-than-average precipitation in late April and May.

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Webmaster

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